

Talk by the
Deputy Director for Support
at the
Reorientation in Supervisory Responsibilities
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I have long felt that one of the most important uses to which this auditorium might be put was to assemble supervisors in large groups such as this and talk about supervision. I had always thought that the benefits would by-and-large be long-range. I'm pleased to note this course is a success already because if you "know thyself" you can get by with a ten-minute break instead of a twenty-minute break.

Since we are for the most part DDS supervisors I want to try to conclude the final presentation with the exception of the panel by talking with you rather informally and rather personally about some of my own philosophies of management and some of my own beliefs about where we fall down as supervisors and where we may improve ourselves, because, in the final analysis, I as the Deputy Director for Support am responsible for everything you do as supervisors whether it's good or bad. I can delegate to Office Heads, they in turn can delegate to you the authorities which have been entrusted to me by the Director; but I can not delegate one iota of my responsibility. So whether you are a good supervisor or a bad supervisor or a successful supervisor is in large measure a reflection upon the Deputy Director for Support.

I don't want you to get the idea that we think everything we do around here is bad. It wouldn't serve much useful purpose to assemble you here and pat you on the back all day. The criticisms which we are offering for your consideration are constructive. We know we have many fine supervisors. We know there is room for improvement in every supervisor and we know there is tremendous room for improvement in many. I have the very greatest admiration for our people; certainly I underscore

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as strongly as I possibly can the remarks made by the Director in which he has praised us as people. By our standards of education, social status, motivation, patriotism, and many others, we represent a very unique group of Americans and I for one am extremely proud to belong to that group. I also believe most sincerely that the praise which has been heaped upon you as professionals, professional intelligence officer, professional operations officer, and profession support officers of all varieties, it is well deserved because I believe in this unique business of ours and in the several specialist fields which you represent you are indeed without peer.

I am equally convinced, however, that we are not as professional as managers as we are in the field of intelligence, operations, logistics, communications, training, or you name it. I am convinced that we have many supervisors who perhaps through lack of training or lack of experience and perhaps through no fault of their own in many instances are inadequate to meet the demanding responsibilities which this Agency places upon its line supervisor. I alluded in my introduction of Mr. McCone to the very heavy responsibilities placed upon a supervisor in this unique business. Coming from a military background I sometimes think that a supervisor in this Agency has a great and possibly a greater responsibility than a military commander in combat and I wish many times it were as easy to determine who is the good supervisor, who is the strong leader, and who is the weak in this business of ours as it is in a military unit in combat. I can assure you that after about the second good

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fire-fight a military leader in combat can separate the men from the boys with relative ease. It's much more difficult in the environment in which you work because you deal with so many intangibles. Pretty easy to see in combat if a fellow turns tail and runs--it's not so easy to detect the weaknesses which supervisors in this Agency have.

A military commander cannot and will not be successful if he merely is a dictator who teaches his men how to shoot, march, and obey. Nor in this Agency can you be successful if you merely lay out the work and expect it to be carried out when you issue the order. The military commander must know his soldiers, he must accept total responsibility for their training, for their welfare, for their motivation; he must know their fears, their aspirations, their ambitions, something about their family background, what makes them tick, what makes them fight, and what gives them the will to win.

Your responsibility in this Agency is no less. Who can say that the responsibilities of the Central Intelligence Agency would be any greater if today we were engaged in a hot war? You are on the firing line right now; you are not in a training capacity for a war which may come; you are in the front line on the cutting edge everyday of our lives and your responsibility is great indeed. You must accept responsibility for your employees well beyond the eight-hour working day. It's not enough to know whether our people are turning in a good product at the end of an eight-hour day. We have to know a great deal about the individual; again, what are his fears, what are his aspirations, what are his ambitions, what makes him tick, what kind of family life does

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he have, what kind of a fellow is he, and how do I handle this particular individual, because no two of us are alike and the supervisor who tries to treat everybody alike is doomed to failure, and that is for sure.

Now, our Support offices, particularly the Medical Office, the Security Office, and the Personnel Office are here to assist you as supervisors. They are not here, however, as offices to which you can pass the buck and avoid your supervisory responsibilities. Every personnel problem, whether it has security, medical, or other overtones, is also your problem as a supervisor and these offices are here to support the command line, the command channel, to bring about effective supervision. They are not here, I repeat, as offices to which we can pass the buck and avoid our supervisory responsibilities. The strength of any organization can come from the command line, from the top down to the bottom and back again if you will, and it is no different in this Agency even though the Medical Office, the Security Office, and the Personnel Office play heavy roles in the lives of our people every day.

Now there are two broad theories of supervision which I would like to invite your attention to for a minute. One is a pretty old fashioned theory which assumes people dislike work, that they must be controlled, directed, coerced, threatened in order to be made to produce, and that in fact they'd rather have it this way. They want to avoid responsibility, they have very little ambition, and above all they want security. As I say this is pretty old fashioned. It might still apply in a shoe factory where people are doing piecework or might still apply to the

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assembly line of an automobile plant or some other place of this kind. It certainly has not much if any advocacy where we're dealing with human beings and where our product generally is an intangible one.

The theory which is most applicable to us, I would like to think, is that work for people is just as natural as play or rest and that people will work hard toward objectives to which they are committed, and I emphasize to which they are committed; that the well motivated individual not only accepts responsibility and leadership, but he seeks it; and that most people have imagination, ingenuity, creativity, and intellectual potential far in excess of that which is being used in their daily activities. This is the kind of supervision which we must have in this Agency. There is no place in this Agency for the theory which believes everyone has to be directed, that no one has any ambition, that all they're looking for is security. If we have any supervisors like that in this Agency they have long outlived their usefulness and should look elsewhere.

So one of your great problems as supervisors is to motivate people, to produce, to work effectively, harmoniously, and successfully with everyone else. What kind of thing is it that makes people produce, what kind of things motivate people? Did you ever stop to ask yourself that question about people generally or have you ever stopped to ask yourself that question about the individual employees you supervise? They are all different. But generally speaking it's not the parking place, it's not the cafeteria, it's not the status symbol, it isn't

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even pay for the most part which makes people well-motivated toward turning out a useful product to national security. Generally speaking, it's job satisfaction, the feeling on the part of an individual that he is doing something important, that he is achieving some success and that his success is earning him some recognition, that he works in an atmosphere where mistakes are a basis for growth and not recrimination. These are the things which normally motivate people to work hard and to do a good job. It is not, as I have said, these things that are peripheral.

I have made a trip recently and if I had any doubts about this before I certainly have no doubts now. Some of the highest morale that you find in our overseas stations, some of the people who are working harder to produce are the people you find in outlying stations with very very few creature comforts. As a general rule, you'll find far more complaining by our people in the bigger cities where life is fairly luxurious, certainly in comparison to some of the more outlying stations. Yet where you find these people doing something which they think is important and they think they are doing it pretty well and their supervisors are recognizing that they are doing it well and patting them on the back when a pat on the back is deserved and criticizing them when criticism is deserved, this is where you have good motivation. Not that the parking spaces and the cafeteria and these other things are not important, they are. If they are allowed to deteriorate, certainly these can act as negative motivators, but they are not nearly so important as the things which I have mentioned which motivate people to work and to produce.

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So what is your role as a supervisor? Well first and foremost you should try to provide conditions which are favorable to motivation. This tests your own skill in organizing and planning your work, knowing your people, matching jobs and requirements. And, as I've said, maintaining an atmosphere where communication lines are open, treating each individual no matter what his job is in such a manner that makes him feel that what he is doing is important to the whole; serving orientation needs if you will, making sure that the people who work with and for you know what the role of the Agency is, what the role of their component in the Agency is, what their individual role is, and how all of these things mesh together in order to have the Agency produce with maximum effectiveness. The serving of orientation needs, if you want to call them that, always being available to your subordinates, within reason of course, to discuss their problems, not only their work problems but their personal problems, is one of the most important things, I think, in a supervisor-subordinate relationship. If this relationship is to be a successful one, in most cases a supervisor must have the technical competence which commands the respect of his subordinates; he must also have the personal qualifications which command respect by that subordinate. And the subordinate in turn must accept these technical qualifications as the example which he is trying to follow and these personal characteristics as something which he admires and respects.

And if there is the proper kind of supervisor-subordinate relationship these orientation needs, which usually require supervisors deeply steeped in Agency history and lore, serve a very useful purpose in keeping

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communication channels open and this is extremely important. I'm told, and I believe it, that our psychologists today have pretty well established that people only hear a maximum of 25% of what is said in a talk of this kind, in conferences, or at other places. So if this is true, and I think it is, it's extremely important that we work hard to become better communicators. The biggest block to personal communications is our inability to listen understandingly and skillfully to another person. And one of the principle reasons we find it difficult to do this is because we think we know a lot, we have a pretty good opinion of ourselves, and we have a tendency to evaluate everything which a person says to us. If someone says to you, "I didn't like what that person said," almost instantly you react by saying, "Well, I didn't like it either, I thought it was terrible," or you might say, "Well, I don't know, I thought it was pretty good." It is a very natural tendency on the part of all of us to evaluate what this person said rather than to try to listen with understanding, rather than to try to put ourselves in his position and try to see the problem as he sees it with his background and his experience and through his eyes. This is the gateway to communications. If we learn to listen with understanding--and many of us as supervisors are too busy to try to do this--or when we are in a consultation with a subordinate we think we have to do all the talking and we expect him to say "Yes, sir" when we finish, and if you are that kind of a supervisor and he is that kind of a "Yes, sir" subordinate you can bet your bottom dollar that in about nine cases out of ten

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he doesn't have the slightest idea what you said to him when he leaves the room. He just knows that this interview was something which was unpleasant and he wanted to get it over with and get out of there and get back to his job as soon as he possibly could.

Another reason which makes it difficult for us to communicate with each other is the emotional feeling that we have about problems--most difficult to communicate with each other when we have emotions involved. The next time you have an argument with a friend or with your wife or with a group of friends, let me suggest just for the fun of it that you try an experiment something like this: you agree with your wife or your friend or your small group of friends, and maybe you should do this in reverse order because it's more difficult when you're trying to agree with your wife to start out with, that those involved in the discussion or argument can speak up only when they have stated the other person's position on the point under discussion to that person's satisfaction. If you can state the other person's position as he has expressed it from his own feelings and through his own eyes to his satisfaction, then you have a common basis for which to start and you are probably in real communication and the chances are that you'll come out with some real solution to the problem.

It takes courage to do this, it takes courage to listen because we as supervisors and we as people have a tendency to think that we have figured out all the answers, that we are pretty infallible, and these subordinates of ours are people who take orders and get the job done and

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if they can't do that pick up the pay check on the way home. We need to learn some simple truths, we're not infallible, everybody has a contribution to make, and if you will only learn to listen you will find that most of your subordinates can help you no matter how big or how small your supervisory job may be. But this takes a lot of courage, because if you put yourself in his position, you try to look at the problem or look at the world through his eyes, you run the risk of being changed, and we don't like to change because we're pretty self satisfied, so this takes courage and we don't always have it. But too frequently we communicate at our subordinates and not with them. So one of the first and strongest suggestions I'd like to make to you is that we as supervisors try desperately to be better listeners.

Now we must recognize that most human beings have a different set of human values, and I for one would not attempt to put everybody in the same mold on this subject because different values on different ideas at least are healthy, up to a point. However we must have standards in human values and we must have the courage to deal with those people whose human values are not satisfactory, whose human values are incompatible with our own, whose human values are not consistent with the principles of supervision and the principles of personal conduct which this Agency must insist upon. We must recognize that we can not afford to be a rehabilitation center for the delinquent and a home for the indigent. We must accept our supervisory responsibilities, we must establish human values, we must make clear to everybody what they are, we must insist that they be adhered to within reasonable limits, and we must have the courage to do something about it if we fail.

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I'm not suggesting for one moment that every supervisor should take a hard-nose approach to this problem. Far from it. I think that there is plenty of room for tolerance and plenty of room for flexibility, but when we have set out our standards, and particularly in so far as they refer to integrity, fair dealing with one another, it is pretty definite where we have to draw the line. As I say, it is extremely important that we have our subordinates committed to the right set of human values. If you've done that you've won 90% of your battle. If you haven't done that and you find it necessary to really take pretty severe action and discipline an employee or even recommend his separation, I am convinced that this individual will probably be better off by reason of having had this experience and certainly the Agency will be far better off. And this you must face up to as supervisors.

I've had many personal experiences which have brought me to this prediction through the years and if you will pardon me using a personal example I would like to refer to two to illustrate the point I am trying to make. During World War II, I was a Regimental Commander. An infantry regiment in those days consisted of about 3,000 men. Because we'd been overseas for a long time and in combat for a long time we were permitted to rotate to the United States 5% of our strength each month. This meant a half dozen officers and about a 150 enlisted men. After consultation with appropriate officers in the regiment, but always with the chaplain and the doctor, I personally selected the few officers who were to be rotated to the States. The 150 enlisted men were selected by drawing names out of a hat. Whoever was lucky enough to have his name

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drawn, regardless of how badly we needed him, was allowed to rotate overseas. On two separate occasions I made an exception to this rule for enlisted men--two separate occasions where I was convinced there were extremely compassionate reasons why an enlisted man should go home to his family I selected him without putting his name in the hat. No one of the 3,000 officers and men in the regiment knew this except me and one other person. That was my adjutant, a very brilliant young captain, Phi Beta Kappa, came into the war from Northwestern University having been editor of their school paper, very brilliant record, and I had complete confidence in this young captain without any question whatever. Much to my surprise, a little later the captain launched a very concerted campaign to be rotated to the States. His mother was very sick and would probably die unless he came home, as he put it. I offered him every chance to submit medical evidence to this effect without any commitment that I would or would not honor it. But in the final analysis I turned the young captain down because he was young, he was single, he'd had rapid promotion, he was in relatively little danger of getting shot much less killed, which was the exception rather than the rule in the regiment which I commanded. With my permission this young captain appealed his case to the division commander. Much to my surprise the principal argument which he used in pleading his case with the division commander was the precedent that I had set in selecting two single enlisted men for compassionate reasons. In his judgment his compassionate reasons were as good as their's and he asked no more and he asked no less. The division commander did not honor his appeal and after he had denied it I worked

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this young man over quite considerably for taking unfair and undue advantage of confidence and trust which I had placed in him. I had no objection to his appealing his case but I did have objection to his using what I regarded as privileged information which no other of the 3,000 men could have used to plead his own case. I made it very clear to him that I thought this was wrong and that if he ever violated my trust and confidence again or did any one of a number of other things it would be very simple to convert him to a patrol leader 25 miles in front of our lines instead of working with personnel records at the regimental headquarters. I don't tell this to be amusing. This young captain was a fine young man, he was young, he was a little immature, but he was a very dedicated young man. And he did in fact see my point of view and I think he was in fact sorry for the undue advantage which he had taken of his position. I said, "Your human values and mine are just too far apart and I cannot tolerate you or anyone else abusing the trust and confidence which I place in him." He did in fact accept my point of view; he remained with the regiment throughout the war, did a splendid job, and I count him today as one of my very close friends. Incidentally, his mother is still living and she's in good health.

Coming a little closer to home, when I first came to the Agency about 17 years ago I was in charge of a component which had some overseas activities and I hired a very competent radio engineer to go to one of our overseas stations to serve. About a week before he was to go to this overseas assignment I discovered that he had taken a station wagon and used it for his own personal purposes over the weekend. He

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had taken this station wagon from an Agency installation of which he was in charge, nearby, and had driven it a few hundred miles over the weekend because his fiance was in town and he needed a car and after all he was going overseas in a week and this was the simplest way to do it. On Monday morning when I found out about this I called him in and told him I would be very happy to accept his resignation, but if he did not choose to submit his resignation I would of course see that he was dismissed. He was utterly shocked to think that this was the kind of punishment which would be meted out for simply using a station wagon which belonged to the government over the weekend. I told him he was certainly correct that this indeed would be stiff punishment if that were his offense, but this was not his offense. No other employee at that station, and there were many, could have done this without his permission. By taking undue advantage of the competence and the trust which I had place in him, he had violated my standards of integrity, his human values and mine were simply too far apart. And if I couldn't trust him with a few station wagons ten miles from headquarters I certainly wasn't about to trust him several thousand miles across the ocean. I'm convinced that not only did this individual change his way of thinking but I can assure you this had a very healthy effect on the component with which I was then charged. I think a lot of people examined their human values and their standards.

This individual submitted his resignation, although he was certainly shook up and could hardly believe that he had to do this. He was out of a job two or three months; he finally got a job with the Voice of America. The Voice of America called me and asked me about this young man and I gave him a good recommendation; I told them exactly what had happened and

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why he left the Agency. He took the job and as he was leaving the country for his overseas assignment with VOA he called me on the telephone and said he wanted me to know that he'd had a lot of time to think during the past two or three months and that he wanted me to know that he felt that the decision which I'd made in this case was absolutely right and he hoped that if he ever were placed in a similar position that he'd have the courage to make the same decision.

So you must face up to these things. I appologize for using personal examples, but you must do it if you are going to be an effective supervisor.

Now the weaknesses of our supervisors show up most glaringly in performance ratings and fitness reports. So let's talk about the fitness reporting system to elaborate a little bit on what Mr. Echols has said to you. What's the sense of it all anyway? What are we trying to do? What are our objectives? Is this a chore which you as a supervisor feel that you've got to do once a year? Do you put it off as long as you possibly can and when you make it out do you say as little as you possibly can to make sure you don't offend anybody, and then do you send it down to old Joe to initial? Or do you sit down with him and talk with him about it?

Well, what are our objectives? Well the first objective is the improvement of performance in the job which the individual now holds. So this in itself then suggests that you do not confine your conference with this individual to discussing just how he has done during the past year but that you also talk about the future a little bit. And the second

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goal is the development of people, in two senses: first, we need to develop people to provide the Agency with the talent that it needs to fill positions as they open up, and second, we need to help this individual qualify himself for these more senior positions as they open up. And always we should try to provide the answers to two questions which are on everybody's mind including yours and mine. How am I doing? And where am I going?

There are still people in this Agency who do not believe that one should show a fitness report to a subordinate, there are still people who do not believe that one should discuss his fitness report with a subordinate. Gentlemen, this is 1964, and the days when supervisors behave in that way are long since behind us. We cannot expect to develop an atmosphere of approval, an atmosphere of recognition, an atmosphere in which imagination is stimulated, creativity is stimulated, and motivation encouraged if we are not willing to sit down and talk frankly with the people we supervise. There is no reason in the world why one should dread, which many of us do, to talk with a subordinate about how he is doing and where he is going. If you are one of the people who dread that, fear that, who are afraid to face up to it, then you have a very fundamental problem with yourself right now and you better take a look at it because there is something very fundamentally wrong with your supervisor-subordinate relationship if you have this kind of fear about making out a fitness report. Fitness reports should be no surprise to anybody if you have the proper kind of subordinate-superior relationship. If you are in communication with your subordinates throughout the year on a day to day basis and

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you counsel them and criticize them constructively and let them make a profit from their mistakes, there is no reason why this fitness report which comes around once a year should be any surprise to anybody.

I'd like to suggest, I know that fitness reports are a problem, and I'd like to suggest a very simple approach to getting over some of the hurdles which we have. First, an employee should know exactly what's expected of him, he should know what his job is, he should know what your standards are, and you should have a clear understanding with your subordinate at the beginning of the rating period as to what he's responsible for and what he's accountable for and what you expect, and so forth, and this should be very clearly understood. You should have a small conference and talk about this in most cases, and in that conference you should encourage the subordinate to make a plan for himself. Lay out what you think you are going to accomplish, what are some reasonable targets to accomplish during this period. Ask him to go think this over and then come back and talk with you when he has sort of laid out a program for himself. Then when he comes back, look at his targets, look at his objectives; some of them may be over ambitious, some of them may not be ambitious enough, but this is a chance for you to come to some common understanding as to what you are trying to do, what you are trying to accomplish. And if you can, establish two or three or more check points throughout the year in which he is to be rated, at which time you get together again and sort of review this program and see how it's going. Are you ahead of schedule? Can you move your targets up a little? Are you

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behind? What is the problem? And then at the end of the rating period discuss the whole thing and it probably can be done in a very few minutes and, as in most cases it will be that he has done well, you don't have any problem. At the same time if he has not done well, you have had an understanding in the beginning on what he is supposed to do, you have checked with him periodically and talked with him about how he is doing and this certainly can't be any surprise. He knows the basis on which he's going to be judged, both of you agree on what his job really is, and this whole program takes place within a supervisory-subordinate relationship which should be healthy and should promote that relationship. It has a self correcting characteristic at each of these check points. It gives you an opportunity to spot training needs for this individual, which I emphasize to you is extremely important. One of your responsibilities is to make sure that your people get the training they need, that they are made available for training, given the opportunity to improve their skills and to improve their knowledge so as to be ready to fill the jobs which the Agency has open and so as to give them a leg up on the other people with whom they maybe in competition. It treats as a total process this individual's approach to an organizational problem. It allows him to devise ways and means of attaching it and it translates his ideas into action, incorporates new information as it arises, and carries the plan through to results. This is not very complicated if people would only take this approach.

If you've been in communication, as I said, during this rating period, then we're not going to have the kinds of things which we have had

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in the past where an individual has gone along for five, ten, fifteen years without one word of adverse comment in his fitness report and, as Mr. Echols alluded to in his talk with you, supervisors made it a point not to say anything bad to Old Joe and supervisors made it a point not to let anything adverse get in his file--otherwise what chance did they ever have in getting rid of this fellow if they put anything uncomplimentary in his file? Not so much recently, but in prior years I've had literally hundreds of people referred to me in the Support organization who were really no good as operations officers, they were really no good as intelligence officers, but they would make a wonderful logistics officer because he was a supply sergeant during the war, or he'd make a wonderful personnel officer because he loves people. None of them are any good. Very rarely do you find one of these people who has been around all these years and has all these glowing reports and then finally some supervisor decides to do something about him and as Echols has suggested he throws the book at him and then the fellow says to the Agency, "My goodness, I've been here all these years, I've worked my heart out, nobody ever told me I wasn't doing well." If you are this kind of supervisor you are not measuring up to your responsibilities.

So what kind of supervisor are you anyway? We all have a tendency to say, "Well, you know, I know what he's saying is really right but it doesn't apply to me." I suggest that everything that's been said here this morning applies to all of us in some way or another. If all of it doesn't apply to you perhaps some of it does. So what kind of a supervisor are you?

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Do you believe that people must be controlled and directed with the iron hand of dictator, or do you believe that people have the capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, creativity, which they will apply generously if they are properly motivated under good supervision?

Do you realize that it is a challenging job which allows the feeling of achievement, responsibility, growth, enjoyment of work itself and earned recognition which motivates people? If so, are you giving your people that kind of supervision?

Are you a good listener? Are you in communication with your people or do you communicate at them?

Have you obtained the commitment of the people you supervise to the right set of human values and do you have the courage and the perseverance to take a positive and determined course of action against those whose human values or substandard performance makes them unacceptable for this Agency as long term career employees?

Are you an honest appraiser of people and do you have the strength of character to sit down and talk with your people truthfully, about how they are doing and where they are going?

Do you really know your people and do you accept the total responsibility for their welfare as well as their performance that this Agency expects of its supervisors?

How many of your supervisors have ever had a management and supervisory training course? Have you ever had one? They are available in an abundant supply and good ones.

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These are some of the questions that I would ask each of you to ask yourself most searchingly. These are some of the areas in which we know there is tremendous room for improvement. And these are some of the shortcomings which top management is determined to change.

THANK YOU